

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the prevalence of risk factors for low back pain between two groups of subjects who had been exposed to different levels of physical activity. The subjects were divided into three groups based on their level of physical activity during the previous year: sedentary, moderate, and vigorous. The prevalence of low back pain was determined by a self-report questionnaire. The results showed that the prevalence of low back pain was significantly higher in the sedentary group than in the moderate and vigorous groups. This suggests that physical activity may be a protective factor against low back pain.

Keywords: Low back pain, Physical activity, Risk factors

Introduction

Low back pain is a common problem that affects millions of people each year. It can be caused by a variety of factors, including poor posture, heavy lifting, and prolonged sitting. While there are many treatments available, prevention is the best way to avoid low back pain. One of the most effective ways to prevent low back pain is by staying physically active. Regular exercise helps strengthen the muscles that support the spine and improves circulation. However, it is important to know how much physical activity is enough to protect against low back pain. This study was designed to answer that question by comparing the prevalence of low back pain among three groups of people: those who are sedentary, those who engage in moderate physical activity, and those who engage in vigorous physical activity.

Methods

The study involved a cross-sectional survey of 1,000 adults aged 18 and older. The participants were recruited from various community settings, including gyms, libraries, and senior centers. They were asked to complete a self-report questionnaire that included questions about their demographic characteristics, their level of physical activity over the past year, and whether they experienced low back pain in the last six months. The questionnaire also asked about several other potential risk factors for low back pain, such as smoking status, occupation, and history of injury. The data were analyzed using logistic regression to determine the odds of developing low back pain based on each of the variables measured.

Results

The results of the study showed that the prevalence of low back pain was highest among the sedentary group (approximately 25%), followed by the moderate physical activity group (approximately 15%). The prevalence was lowest among the vigorous physical activity group (approximately 10%). After adjusting for age, sex, and other risk factors, the analysis found that individuals who engaged in moderate or vigorous physical activity had significantly lower odds of reporting low back pain compared to those who were sedentary. Specifically, the odds of low back pain were reduced by approximately 60% for the moderate group and by approximately 75% for the vigorous group.

Conclusion

This study provides strong evidence that regular physical activity is associated with a lower prevalence of low back pain. Even moderate levels of activity appear to offer significant protection. These findings have important implications for public health and clinical practice. Encouraging people to stay active, even if it means taking short walks or doing light household chores, could help reduce the burden of low back pain in the population. Future research should continue to explore the mechanisms behind this relationship and identify specific types of exercises that are most beneficial for spinal health.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire Items

Demographic Information:

Age: _____

Sex: Male [] Female []

Occupation: _____

Level of Physical Activity (past year):

Sedentary [] Moderate [] Vigorous []

Low Back Pain (last 6 months):

No [] Yes []

Risk Factors:

Smoking Status: Never [] Former [] Current []

History of Injury: Yes [] No []

Appendix B: Statistical Analysis Results

Logistic Regression Model:

Dependent Variable: Low Back Pain (Yes/No)

Independent Variables: Age, Sex, Occupation, Physical Activity, Smoking Status, History of Injury

Odds Ratios (OR) and 95% Confidence Intervals (CI):

Physical Activity (Moderate vs Sedentary): OR = 0.40, CI = 0.25-0.65

Physical Activity (Vigorous vs Sedentary): OR = 0.25, CI = 0.15-0.40

Other variables did not show statistically significant associations with low back pain in this model.

Table 1: Prevalence of Low Back Pain by Physical Activity Level

Physical Activity Level	Prevalence (%)
Sedentary	25%
Moderate	15%
Vigorous	10%

Table 2: Odds Ratios for Low Back Pain

Variable	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% CI
Physical Activity (Moderate vs Sedentary)	0.40	0.25-0.65
Physical Activity (Vigorous vs Sedentary)	0.25	0.15-0.40
Age (per 10 years increase)	1.05	0.95-1.15
Sex (Male vs Female)	1.10	0.80-1.50
Occupation (Manual vs Non-Manual)	1.20	0.90-1.60
Smoking Status (Current vs Never)	1.05	0.70-1.55
History of Injury (Yes vs No)	1.15	0.85-1.55

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